

## Being Our Own Best Advocates

### Patient Self-Advocacy: Taking Charge of our Care

We all want to feel satisfaction with our healthcare, but may feel unempowered to ask our provider questions, seek a second opinion, or even change practitioners if we are unhappy with our care.



Rather than acting as a passive recipient, you can become an active participant in your healthcare by:

#### Finding the right provider:

- Begin your search with your health insurance to find out what clinics and providers are available to you.
- Check out providers' qualifications. Do you want a board-certified practitioner? Someone who has many years of experience or who has performed numerous procedures?
- Interview several practitioners. Do they take the time to listen, answer your questions, and learn about your needs and goals? What is their philosophy of care? Does it fit with yours?

#### Making the most of your doctor visit:

- Take along a list of your medications, a copy of your healthcare records, and the results of previous tests and procedures when seeing a new provider.
- Write down your goals for the appointment.
- Ask clarifying questions. Do not to leave until you understand test results or what they need to do next.
- Bring a companion with you if you feel anxious, have a language barrier, or are facing a serious diagnosis.

**Prayer:** Bless the partnerships we have with our healthcare providers. As we take active roles in caring for our health and wellbeing, may we be strengthened to serve and care for others.

## Questions Are the Answer

Get More Involved With Your Health Care

Do You Know the Right Questions to Ask?

- 1 What is the test for?
- 2 How many times have you done this?
- 3 When will I get the results?
- 4 Why do I need this surgery?
- 5 Are there any alternatives to surgery?
- 6 What are the possible complications?
- 7 Which hospital is best for my needs?
- 8 How do you spell the name of that drug?
- 9 Are there any side effects?
- 10 Will this medicine interact with medicines I'm already taking?



For more questions:

[www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer](http://www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer)  
1-800-931-AHRQ (2477)



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